Pictured above are the covers of the first ten issues of the new series of full color EC CLASSICS. Like this issue you are reading, each issue of the EC CLASSICS contains two covers and eight complete EC stories chosen from a particular EC title.

Don’t miss a single issue! Ask your favorite Comic Book Shop to stock these EC CLASSICS, or subscribe directly from the publisher.

A six-issue subscription is $25 ($40 outside U.S.A.). Single back issues are $6.00 each. All prices include postage. (Note: the subscription price includes mailing by third-class mail. For six issues mailed first class, the subscription price is $35.)

When I was a wild-eyed EC Fan-Addict in the 1950s, my very favorite EC title was THE HAUNT OF FEAR. I still have vivid recollections of the thrill of receiving a new issue of HAUNT in the mail... sliding the comic out of that sturdy manila envelope... seeing the new “Ghastly” cover for the first time.

Graham Ingels, whom Bill Gaines dubbed “Ghastly” Graham Ingels in a letter column, was and is a painter... a fine artist. His comic book style and his skill with the inking brush—his own personal combination of dry-brush and fine-line inking... gave his gothic horror stories a mood that has never been equalled to this day.

This EC CLASSIC #9 contains, appropriately, the origin story of the Old Witch, “A Little Stranger.”

Here are the eight stories and two covers from THE HAUNT OF FEAR #14 and #15.
HEE, HEE! ORAS YOUR PALPITATING CORPSES INTO THE HAUNT OF FEAR, KIOODIES! YEP, IT'S YOUR HOSTESS IN HYSTERICS, THE OLD WITCH, READY TO RUSTLE UP ANOTHER REVOLTING RECIPE IN MY REEKING CAULDRON? SMELL IT? IT'S A SPECIAL BREW THIS TIME EXTRA SPECIAL! READY? GOT YOUR DRIBBLE-CUPS FASTENED? GOT YOUR SHROUDS TUCKED UNDER YOUR CHINS? GOOD. THEN I'LL SERVE THE SLOBBERING STOY I CALL...

A LITTLE STRANGER!

FOR A MOMENT, THERE IS A DEAD SILENCE: THE FLICKERING LIGHT OF THEIR TORCHES CASTS AN EERIE GLOW OVER THE BODY SRAWLED BEFORE THEM. THEY STARE WITH HORRIFIED FACES AT THE CORPSE. ONE OF THE MEN STOOPS AND POINTS...

LOOK ON HIS NECK TWO PUNCTURES... THE MARK OF A VAMPIRE! IMPOSSIBLE! THE BODY HAS BEEN PARTIALLY DEVORRED! I TELL YOU IT IS THE WORK OF A WEREWOLF.
An older man shakes his head. "No, Peter! You are wrong! The blood has been drained from the body! It is a vampire!"

But a vampire does not feast upon the flesh, Victor! He is right, Victor! A werewolf feasts upon the flesh! Then explain to me, if you can, the holes in the neck!

Hmmm! A werewolf would not do that! Unless... unless.

Gasp! Unless he was killed by both!

"Both? You mean...? A vampire... and a werewolf... stalking the countryside... together..."

Many miles from the horrified group of villagers, high in the Bavarian Alps that tower above their heads, in a cave long since forgotten by those who guide mountain-climbers, a romantic scene is taking place... to you... my dear! Tonight... you were... divine! And to you... my love! Tonight was... another triumph!

But as we draw close to the loving couple, we notice something strange... something terrifying! The woman, although very beautiful, has sharp little fangs! For she... is a vampire... perhaps we will stay here for a while, my sweet! I am so tired of wandering!

...and the man's ears are pointed... his face is covered with hair... his eyes gleam yellow in the candlelight! For the man... is a werewolf.

Maybe... maybe if we look hard... we will find someone here who will marry us!

We will see, my dear! Come! It is almost dawn!
The couple rise and stroll, arm and arm, deeper into the cave. Soon, they come upon a simple pine coffin, lying in the shadows.

Good morning, my darling! Good morning, my dearest!

The woman climbs into the coffin and lies down. Soon, her eyelids close, as the crow of a rooster drifts up from the valley below. She falls asleep.

The man sighs and closes the coffin lid. Then he turns toward the cave opening where the first grey streaks of dawn filter through the overgrown entrance. His yellow eyes grow dark...

The hair on his face recedes! His pointed ears round off! The sharp claws of his fingers shorten...

...and once again, he takes on human form... the form of a seedy mountain hermit...

Far below, the men are just returning with the corpse of their fellow villager... He has been murdered! The work of a vampire... and a werewolf! Heaven, protect us!

In his cave, the hermit curls up beside the coffin and closes his eyes. A smile crosses his twisted lips. He whispers softly...

Elicia! My Elicia!
The hermit's thoughts go back...back to that time so long ago when first he'd come upon the forbidden plant growing high in the Bavarian Alps. "WOLFSBANE! Good Lord!"

He'd stumbled upon the plant accidentally! One of its spiny thorns had scratched his forearm...

...I'm bleeding! The wolfsbane has infected my blood...

...and less than a month later, he'd learned the truth! That first night, when the moon was full, he'd changed...

What's happening to me? My nails grow long! My ears twitch! My face...

His reflection in the shimmering pool had told him all there was to know...

I...I am a werewolf!

That night, he'd killed and feasted upon his first victim! The second month, at the time of the full moon, he'd killed again! But the third month, as he'd bent over his third victim... What's that? Someone's coming!

He'd darted into the bushes and waited! She'd come up to his latest victim! Elicia...beautiful Elicia...

She...she does not scream!

No! Elicia had not screamed! Instead, she'd stooped and begun to drink her fill...

She...she's a vampire!
They'd quarreled then...

He'd flung himself from his HIDING PLACE AND STOOD OVER HER, pointing...

she... he is mine!

you... abandoned him!

They'd quarreled then...

wait! why fight? huh? both? there is enough for both of us!

She was beautiful! very beautiful! it was easy to accept her offer! after they'd finished...

my name is elicia!

and mine is zorgo!

They'd fallen in love! love at first fright, you might say! zorgo'd agreed...

we will meet next month when the moon is full once again!

I will wait for you, elicia!

Every month when the moon was full, they'd wandered over the countryside... killing...

I worry, my darling! what if someone should find your resting place?

I would drive a stake through my heart... and destroy me!

So zorgo'd appointed himself guardian of elicia's coffin! on moonless nights... when he was normal and elicia slept... he'd moved her coffin from hiding place to hiding place, keeping well ahead of the enraged villagers that scoured the countryside, searching for them...

I take care of you, my sweet!

And each night of the full moon, they'd vowed ...

someday... someday my dear, we will find someone who will marry us!

Oh, zorgo! i hope so!
Suddenly, Zorso starts from his day-dream. Voices echo through the cave! The villagers have discovered his latest hiding place...

He must be the Werewolf! Quickly shoot!
And so, as howling winds shriek through open mausoleums... as tottering remains of evil stumble toward the spot... as creatures of the night leer from behind tombstones... as foul odors of decay and rot waft through the night air... Elicia and Zorgo are wed! The moaning of the dead their organ music... the screaming of banshees their choir... and soon all is quiet again in the devil's grave yard! The creatures of evil return to their resting places... the graves are closed... the wind dies down... dawn breaks silently... on a peaceful scene.

Their honeymoon suite is a mausoleum... a slab of marble their bed! As is the custom, the bride is carried across the threshold... the stake still awkwardly jutting from her chest.

And so, it remains... for days... and weeks... and months! Then, almost a year later, the stirring begins again! The darkness falls, and the creatures move! The graves crack open, and rotted things push up... "Hurry! It is almost time!" "Tonight is the night!"

Things of evil stumble toward the mausoleum... others peer through the door... the broken window! The wind howls... the banshees scream... tonight, Elicia... and Zorgo expect...
Inside the mausoleum, Elicia cradles the little thing in her arms. Zorgo stands over them... proudly! The creatures of evil titter and giggle...

Isn't it cute? What is it, Elicia? It... I... I think it's... A girl!

Hee, hee! Yep! It was a girl, kiddies! It had a dead vampire for a mother, and a dead werewolf for an old man! And I was a darlin' lil' tyke, too! Huh? Oh! Yeah! It was me... the old witch! You fiends have been askin' me where I came from. So I decided to tell you! Oh... by the way! How'd you like to attend a family reunion? Mine! No? Gee, that's too bad! We always have one smell of a time! Now I'll turn you over to the vault-keeper. Dig ya' later!
The ragged little urchin stood upon the porch of the Braden home, shivering from the biting wind that swept across the snow-covered lawn. His coat was torn and threadbare. His pants, patched, he needed a fresh little hand up smartly.

As Stuart Braden swung open the door and stared down at him...

Well, what do you want? P-Please, Mister! My daddy ain't workin'! I ain't had anythin' to eat for two days! Could you spare a...

Stuart Braden snarled at the sallow-faced child before him...

Go on, you little beggar! Scram! Go on back across the tracks where you came from! Only a quarter... Mister! I got a lil' sister! She...
Mr. Braden spun around, glaring at his wife...

I don't see how you can be so cold-hearted.

If I gave him something, I'd have 'em all coming here...

Stuart Braden didn't change! In fact, he got much worse...

It's no concern of mine, Emma! Joe Galsey made his own bed... now let him lie in it!

But, Stuart! Joe was your business partner! Mrs. Galsey came here today to beg you to give him a job!
EMMA AND STUART HAD NO CHILDREN! THEY DID
HAVE A DOG... ARF, ARF!

Emma! What's that mutt doing in here?

Stuart! It's freezing outside!

But, Stuart! She won't have her tracking up the rug...

I don't give a hoot! Get her outside... the mangy mongrel!

I'm sorry. I can see... I'm sorry...

My husband has a heart... I...

Of ice, Mrs. Galsey! I...

I'm sorry! Come on, lady! Come on, girl!

Come to mama, sob... sob...

Either you take her outside or I will, Emma!

How can you be so cruel, Stuart?

So cold-hearted? So ahead! Say it! I've got a heart of ice! Well, maybe you're right... now get that mutt outside!

Stuart! The poor thing was shivering in her kennel! She'll... she'll freeze out there! Please... Stuart! Just this once...

So cold-hearted? So cruel?

So... so...
One night, as Mr. and Mrs. Braden were driving home from a visit to Emma's mother... She didn't look very well tonight, did she Stuart?

I didn't notice! What are you going to do? Ask me to give her more money?

It wouldn't hurt! Ten dollars a week isn't very much to live on these days! You could cut down on my allowance!

Anything doing! I've got myself to think of! If your old man hadn't been so generous, your mother'd be better off than she is now that he's dead!

Please, Stuart! I'm not asking for myself! Mother is old! She... she... gasp!

Huh? What's that?

The headlights of the Braden automobile fell upon a figure lying on the road...

It's a man! He's... he's hurt! Look! He's bleeding!

Some hit-and-run driver must've struck him!

Stuart pressed down on the accelerator and sped past the injured man.

Stuart! Stop! He needs help!

Not me, Emma!

I mind my own business! I keep my nose clean! I don't want to be involved in other people's troubles.

Stuart! He's hurt! How could you?

Let some other sucker stop! It's no concern of mine!

...sob... You're inhuman, Stuart! No one could be so cold-hearted!... sob... sob...
THERE ARE AGENCIES TO TAKE CARE OF PEOPLE IN HER PREDICAMENT, EMMA! NOT ME! IT'S NOT MY BUSINESS!

OH COULDN'T I, EMMA? ARE YOU FORGETTING? I'M COLD-HEARTED STUART... THE MAN WITH THE HEART OF ICE! REMEMBER?

A FEW DAYS LATER, EMMA RECEIVED THE NEWS...

IT'S... MOTHER, STU! SHE'S ILL! SHE NEEDS A DOCTOR!

SHE DOESN'T HAVE THE MONEY, STUART! PLEASE LET ME CALL A DOCTOR FOR HER! I'LL PAY FOR IT!

ALL RIGHT! BUT IT COMES OUT OF YOUR ALLOWANCE! SHE'S YOUR MOTHER!

So Emma sent for a doctor to take care of her sick mother...

YOUR MOTHER IS IN SERIOUS CONDITION, MRS. BRADEN! SHE NEEDS TO BE HOSPITALIZED IMMEDIATELY! AN OPERATION IS NECESSARY! THIS WILL COST A GREAT DEAL!
Naturally, Stuart was deeply concerned about this turn of events...

How can you...look at it...so coldly?

What did your old lady ever do for me? Suppose the operation doesn't help? It'll be thrown out money!

What? A hospital? An operation? And who's going to pay for this?

Surely, in such an emergency...

What? A hospital? An operation? And who's going to pay for this?

Stuart, it's my mother!)

I...I'm sorry, doctor! My husband... sob... refuses... sob... sob... to sob... pay for sob.

But your mother may die, Mrs. Braden!

I... I know! Sob! I'm helpless under the circumstances, Mrs. Braden! Your mother needs a specialist!

Emma was a rigid mask.

...I hate you, Stuart Braden! Hmmm!

And when the doctor called, Emma hung up and turned to Stuart.

I... I'm sorry, doctor! My husband... sob... refuses... sob... sob... to sob... pay for sob.

But your mother may die, Mrs. Braden!

I... I know! Sob! I'm helpless under the circumstances, Mrs. Braden! Your mother needs a specialist!

Emma stared out of the window, the tears streaming down her face, the glistening snow glaring in her eyes, causing them to tear even more. Suddenly...

Gasp! Lady!
Emma hurried out to the still form lying half out of the kennel! She picked it up...

**LADY! SOB... MY LADY!**

Emma came into the house cradling the dead dog in her arms! She stared at Stuart...

**S'MATTER WITH YOU?**

**LADY! SHE... SHE'S DEAD!**

_The dog was stiff, frozen stiff! The dog was dead... He... sob... he killed you! He made me lock you out... sob... and you froze... sob... you froze... sob... to death..._

When the police came to the Braden home in answer to the neighbors' frantic phone calls, they found Emma kneeling beside Stuart's body, chipping away at his chest with a blood-smearred ice-pick! She'd been at it for some time! They could tell! As she chopped, she muttered hysterically:

**ICE-CREATED... SOB... SOB... ICE... HEART... SOB... ICE... HEART... EH... EH...**

_Heh, heh! And that's my warming little story for this issue, kiddies. After the men in the little white coats took Emma away, the coroner examined what was left of Stuart Braden's body. 'Know what he found in the gaping hole Emma tore in Stu's chest? Yep! You guessed it! Hopped ice! Before you leave the vault, fiends! Care for a cold drink? No? Hmmmm! Too bad! Ye now._

Emma hung up and went into the kitchen! When she came out, she had her arms behind her back! She moved toward Stuart, her voice shaking uncontrollably! She practically screamed...

**MURDERER! ICE-CREATED MURDERER!**

Emma! Don't look at me like that!

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Stuart shrugged! Emma's eyes began to bulge! Her cheeks grew hot! The phone rang...

**HELLO? YES! THIS IS MRS. BRADEN!**

I'm sorry, Mrs. Braden! I did all I could! Your mother just died!

Hello? Yes! This is Mrs. Braden! I'm sorry, Mrs. Braden! I did all I could! Your mother just died!

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**MURDERER! ICE-CREATED MURDERER!**

Emma! Don't look at me like that!
IN THIS GRUESOME TALE OF TERROR, EVERYTHING IS...

SHIP-SHAPE!

The engine of the tiny plane sputtered and coughed! Down below, the choppy waters of the South Pacific stretched from horizon to horizon...

WHAT IS IT, BOB? WHAT'S WRONG? WE'RE ALMOST OUT OF GAS! WE MUST HAVE SPRUNG A LEAK WHEN WE TOOK OFF FROM GUAM!

INSIDE THE PLANE, THE FOUR PASSENGERS STARED IN HORROR AT THE WHITE NEEDLE OF THE FUEL GAUGE AS IT TREMBLED OVER THE EMPTY MARK...

HOW LONG CAN WE LAST, BOB? ANOTHER TEN MINUTES, PERHAPS! PROFESSOR! SEE ANYTHING DOWN THERE? AN ISLAND... OR A SHIP?

NOT A THING! GOD HELP US! WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE!
The tiny plane's engine spit and died! Silence closed in! The blue-green below rushed up to meet the gliding craft... Soon the crippled airplane touched the ocean surface, skidding across it! A foamy spray kicked up and fanned out behind... The plane came to a stop, resting half-submerged in the choppy water! The four passengers scrambled out onto the wing! First, Professor Henry Wolfson, the famous zoologist... After Jean Grady, Professor Wolfson's secretary, climbed out onto the wing, the pilot, Robert Bryen, passed her the compact life-raft...

**Doctor Rudolf Zerger**, the professor's cohort, a famous biologist, followed... Let me give you a hand, Miss Grady... Thank you, doctor! Let's go, Jean! The plane won't stay afloat too long! I want to get this life-raft inflated... There she goes! Bryen! Do you have any idea where we are? About four hundred miles southwest of Guam, professor! We're just south of the shipping lanes!
Two days later, the small supply of food and water Bob had managed to salvage had been used up! The survivors watched with morbid fascination as several black fins knifed through the water about the raft...

A black silhouette of a small tanker loomed up to the east? Professor Wolfson began to wave his jacket frantically...

**SHARKS!** Look! There! See it? A ship! A ship!

**Help! Help!** Start paddling! Hurry! Sit down, Professor! You'll upset the raft and those blasted sharks'll get us!

Soon, the survivors had approached the tanker close enough to see...

There's no smoke coming from the stacks!

What's that strange smell? Bob! I'm frightened! Derelict ship or no, we're going aboard! At least it's afloat, and there may be some food on it!

Soon, the four crash-victims stood upon the foul-smelling deck of the strange vessel...

A frayed rope-ladder hung over the side of the deserted tanker? Bob tied the raft to it...

A ship! A ship!

The deck plates! It feels as if they give way under foot!

Y're right, Zenger! They feel soft! Spongy!

Phew! It smells musty... Moly!

The hull seems to be covered with some kind of moss?

I'll go first! You next, Jean! The Professor and the Doc will follow!

O'mon! Let's see if there's any water on board!
YOU GO, BRYEN! I WANT TO EXAMINE THIS FUNGUS THAT SEEMS TO COVER THE ENTIRE SHIP!

OKAY, PROFESSOR! SUIT YOURSELF COMING, JEAN?

RIGHT BEHIND YOU, BOB!

I'LL STAY WITH HENRY, MR. BRYEN!

Bob and Jean moved across the spongy deck and down the moss-laden gangway into the cabin...

BOB! WHAT THE FUNKUS THAT SEEMS TO COVER THE ENTIRE SHIP?

SEARCH ME, JEAN! PROBABLY ABANDONED HER! MAYBE THE ENGINES...

You saw the rest?

Good Lord! What was that?

The professor! He screamed!

Mr. Bryen! Help! Come quickly! Oh, my God...

What the... Professor? Oh, Bob! I can't look!

Bob and Jean reached the deck just in time to see the professor... His face twisted in excruciating pain, his arms clawing the air... sinking slowly into a spongy oozing pool! An odor of decay drifted toward them...

Eeeeeeeeee! What the... Professor? Oh, Bob! I can't look!

Finally the professor's screams subsided and he sank below the deck-surface! The oozing pool seemed to harden over the spot...

It's... som... horrible! What happened, Doctor Zerger?

Henry... he... he wanted to examine the fungus that covers everything! He took out his pocket knife and started to scrape the deck! Then... cough...choke...

Go on, Doctor. Then...

He seemed to cut through some sort of membrane! A foul-smelling pool oozed from the incision! It...it engulfed him! He...choke...he... just seemed to dissolve! You... you saw the rest!

I...I feel sick, Bob...
Jean passed out in Bob's arms! Doctor Zerger screamed at him... BE CAREFUL, BRYEN! JEAN! JEAN... HONEY! OK, LORD! I wish we had some water!

We've got to be careful not to damage the membrane that covers the ship! Otherwise we'll suffer the same fate as Professor Wolfson.

What is it, Doctor? What's happened to this tanker?

Do you know what petrified wood is, Bryen? It's wood that has turned to stone! Yet, the stone shows every grain... every fibre... every pore of the wood! The stone took the wood's form! Understand?

What's that got to do with this ship?

Jean opened her eyes! She shuddered! Bob lifted her in his strong arms...

Let's go, Doctor!

Put her down! You're both too heavy...

Doctor Zerger's warning came too late! Bob felt the spongy deck give under his feet... like a piece of paper tearing! Doctor Zerger lunged forward...

Look out!

Bob felt a stinging pain in his left foot as Doctor Zerger shoved him hard! He and Jean went sprawling! The doctor was caught in the sucking gulping pool that oozed from the spot where the young couple had just been standing...

Yaaaaaghh! Don't look, baby! It... it's... horrible!
Don't worry, honey. They're probably out looking for us right now.

Bob! You're hurt! It's nothing, Jean.

The young couple scrambled down to the life-raft and paddled away from the nightmarish vessel.

I'd rather face the hardships of the open sea than stay on board that horror!

Don't worry, honey! They'll spot us! They're probably out looking for us right now!

Soon the doctor's screaming died, as only his clutching hand remained above the shimmering pool.

...And even that soon dissolved into it! Bob looked down at his left foot! The shoe had been eaten away! The sock, too! The raw and bleeding flesh appeared as if it had been dipped in molten metal.

Bob! You're hurt! It's nothing, Jean!

The next day, their mouths parched from lack of water, their stomachs aching from hunger. Bob and Jean spotted the plane high overhead! Bob began to wave his shirt.

They see us... They see us! Oh, Bob, darling! We're saved!

Hee, hee! Yep! Doesn't a story like that melt your heart? It did Bob's and Jean's! In fact, not only their hearts, but their whole bodies melted as the god filled the raft-floor! Now was the life-raft punctured so the stuff dozed out? Well, it seems that Bob's big toe had a hang-nail, and he got excited waving to the plane! Okay! So it wasn't much of a kick! Actually... hee, hee. It didn't take very much now comes the crypt-keeper! 'Bye!
HEH, HEH! ONE MORE TO GO, AND THEN YOU CAN ALL RETIRE FOR YOUR NIGHTMARES! YEP! IT'S YOUR CRYPT-KEEPER'S CHANCE TO TERRORIZE YOU NOW! COME INTO THE CRYPT OF TERROR! PLAP DOWN ON THAT PLANK, AND I'LL TELL YOU A DELICIOUS LITTLE TALE, GUARANTEED NOT TO BORE YOU! IT'S CALLED THIS LITTLE PIGGY... North of Delhi near Meerut on the River Ganges in India, a young British officer reined up his panting steed and pointed off toward the grassy clearing before him. Look, Simia! In the brush! A wild boar! I see, Sahib! I see him! This looks like good hunting ground for boar!
The British officer and his Indian servant spurred their horses and continued on their trip! Several hours later, they neared a walled settlement...

There's the garrison, Simia!

A sentry sees us, Sahib! He signals us to stop!

Halt, you two! What business do you have with the governor?

I am Lieutenant Horace Sturdy... Royal Bengal Lancers! Governor Sturdy is my uncle!

Oh, yes, Lieutenant! The governor is expecting you! Open the gates!

There's the garrison, Simia!

A sentry sees us, Sahib! He signals us to stop!

The sentry leaned over the stockade wall, aiming his rifle.

What are you two up to? What business do you have with the governor?

I am Lieutenant Horace Sturdy... Royal Bengal Lancers! Governor Sturdy is my uncle!

Oh, yes, Lieutenant! The governor is expecting you! Open the gates!

The stockade gates were swung back and Lieutenant Sturdy and his servant Simia rode into the garrison enclosure...

Horace! My boy! Good to see you!

Uncle Felix! You're looking well!

I see there are plenty of wild boar in these parts, uncle! When is the next hunt?

Hunt? Oh, no! We hunt no boar in Meerut, Horace!

What? You have no tent club, uncle? You don't go pig-sticking here?

Heavens, no, m'boy! The boar is a sacred animal in Meerut! The Indian tribesmen here worship it!

Bah! You actually worry about what those heathen devils think? Not me! The first chance I get, I'm going...

You'll do no such thing, Horace! I forbid it! It might mean a nasty uprising if you were to kill one of the sacred boars!
But ignoring his uncle's warning, before dawn the next day, Lieutenant Sturdy and his Indian servant rode out of the garrison enclosure armed with spears...


Half an hour later the two men spotted their quarry nosing about in the low grass of an open clearing...

Despite its awkward appearance, a boar is quite swift! Lieutenant Sturdy's quarry spun around and started off through the low grass! The lieutenant's swift steed quickly closed the gap between him and the scurrying animal...

Suddenly, the crafty wild hog jinked or turned sharply in its tracks! Lieutenant Sturdy pulled up sharply on the reins, and his horse reared...

The lieutenant hung for a moment, as if suspended in mid-air... then fell to the ground! The squealing boar swung toward him, its red-eyes blazing... its lethal tusks lowered! It charged...

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The fatally injured boar rolled over and lay quite still. Simia dismounted and stood over it. Lieutenant Sturdy got to his feet and dusted himself off...

As you wish, Sahib! What will we do with the boar we have killed?

Why, you're going to prepare it the way we do in Kadin, Simia! I'll show you how! One taste of a well-roasted boar, and Uncle will forget to be annoyed with me!

Very good, Sahib! The sun is coming up! Your uncle will be rising soon!

Later, in the garrison kitchen, Lieutenant Sturdy shows Simia how to prepare roast-boar...

First you boil the animal in this vat of scalding water, Simia! That is how you remove the boar's bristles...

After you've boiled the hairs off, you roast the boar on a spit over a bed of red-hot coals!

You'll serve the roasted boar on a wooden platter with an apple in its mouth tonight, Simia!

Yes, Sahib!

Yes, Sahib!

Yes, uncle! Tonight we eat roast boar!

Yes, uncle! Tonight we feast upon something special! All right, Simia!

Good lord! Horace! You idiot!

And so, that night...

I have a surprise for you, uncle! Tonight we feast upon something special! All right, Simia!

A surprise, Horace? How nice!

Yes, uncle! Tonight we eat roast boar!

Yes, uncle! Tonight we eat roast boar!
One of the native Meerut servants stared in horror at the roast boar! The governor exploded...

Get that blasted thing out of here!

But, uncle! Aren't you even going to taste it? It's delicious!

Governor Sturdy shot a glance at the native servant whose face now was a grim mask showing no emotion...

Nonse, uncle! No one saw me spear the blasted pig!

You stupid fool! That servant is a member of the local tribe! He'll report it!

I'm sorry, uncle! I didn't know.

The Meerut bowed and left the dining-room...

The governor glared at his nephew...

From now on, until I can sneak you out of this province, your life isn't worth two shillings! You'll stay within the garrison walls! Understand?

I understand, uncle!

Well, I saw the Chief of the Meeruts today and made a formal apology! I told him you didn't know that they held the boar in such high regard! I've assured him it won't happen again! You're leaving here tomorrow.

Yes, uncle!

After governor Sturdy left his nephew's room...

Did you hear that, Simia? We're getting kicked out tomorrow.

I hear, sahib!

Well, I'm not leaving till I get me a boar's head to bring back with me to Kadin!

No, sahib! That is not wise! Leave well enough alone!
NO SENSE, SIMIA! NO, SAHIH! I NOT GO WITH YOU!
I'M ORDERING YOU TO GO WITH ME!
NO! NO! I TELL YOUR UNCLE!
ALL RIGHT! I'LL GO MYSELF! TOMORROW AT DAWN! BUT, SO HELP ME, SIMIA... IF MY UNCLE FINDS OUT...IF YOU BREATHE A WORD... I'LL CUT YOUR TONGUE OUT!

The next day, before sunrise, Lieutenant Horace Sturdy, Royal Bengal Lancers, rode out into the boar country with his spear...

All right, you little devils! Just one of you... show your ugly snout...

Horace spotted a boar soon after! He lowered his spear and kicked his horse! The wild pig snorted...

It wheeled sharply...starting to run on its short little legs! Horace was over it...his lance poised...

Then the spear was rammed home! The wild boar squealed, rolling over and over! Lieutenant Sturdy dismounted and knelt to sever its head! He never noticed the brown, muscular hand seize his horse's dangling reins...

Good size! He'll make a beauty of a plate! Too bad I can't have him roasted...
The whinny of his horse made Horace look up! A Meerut tribesman sat astride the steed, a roughly hewn lance hung in the native's hand...

"WHAT THE... I SAY! GET OFF MY..."

"RUN... INFIDEL!"

"THAT NIGHT, LIEUTENANT STURODY'S WORRIED UNCLE ENTERED THE GARRISON DINING-ROOM WITH LITTLE APPETITE EVEN THAT SOON VANISHED WHEN HE CUGHT SIGHT OF THE FIGURE ON THE TABLE! IT LAY IN A CROUCHED POSITION ON A HUGE PLANK! ITS HAIR HAD BEEN BOILED OFF, AND ITS FLESH BROWNED TO A CRISP! IN ITS MOUTH, WAS A JUICY RED APPLE...

"NO! ND!"

"GOOD LORD! HORACE!"

"HEH. HEH! SO IF YOU KNOW ANY BDRES, KIOOIES, TAKE A LESSON FROM THE MEERUT CHIEF PUTS IT, "AN APPLE A DAY KEEPS THE HUNTERS AWAY!" AIN'T IT THE FRUIT?"

CHATTER-BOXED!

IT WAS A BRISK DAY IN NOVEMBER, 1941! THE MAN LAY SPRAWLED ON THE COLD SIDEWALK WHERE HE HAD FALLEN! HIS FACE WAS ASHEN-WHITE... HIS LIPS BLUE! THE CROWD AROUND HIM FORMED QUICKLY... ANXIOUS EYES PEERED DOWN AT HIM...

WHAT HAPPENED? HE JUST KEELED OVER! SOMEBODY GET AN AMBULANCE! HE HE LOOKS DEAD!
Several minutes later, an ambulance, its siren screaming, pulled up to the curb beside the prostrate figure...

The white-coated ambulance doctor knelt over the man lying on the gray sidewalk. He listened with his stethoscope... felt for a pulse... then shook his head...

This man is dead!

It was an hour later that Eileen Filburt finally said good-bye to her friend Sadie! They'd been at it, talking, for even longer than that! As soon as she hung up...

Huh? Oh, dear! Another call! And I have so much to do!

Yes? This is Mrs. Filburt! We've been trying to reach you for an hour, Mrs. Filburt! Your line was busy!

Oh! I was chatting with a girl friend! Who is this?

This is the morgue calling, Mrs. Filburt! You'd better brace yourself! They brought your husband's body in here a while ago! He's... dead!

A hush fell over the people seated in the funeral parlor's chapel! The coffin lid was opened! The voice of the orator began to drone! Jacob Filburt's funeral services had begun...

And so... in final peace... Jacob Filburt's remains will be laid to rest! But he leaves behind the love... the devotion... the kindness he practiced while he lived...

The funeral orator's voice droned on and on, interrupted only by the pitiful sobs of the mourners before him! Suddenly, a shriek echoed through the funeral chapel...

EEEEAAAHHH!
And as Jacob Filbert sat up, the chapel was filled with cries of terror. Women mourners, tripping on their black dresses, scrambled for the exits! Men pushed after them! A girl fell, screaming, and the others trampled over her...

YAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAGHHHH!

Sheer horror gripped the mourning gathering! All eyes stared at the open coffin! A white veined hand reached up, grasping the coffin lid...

Some, rooted with mortal fear to the spot where they stood, just stared at the pale figure rising in his coffin! Suddenly, Jacob's eyes blinked open! Color rushed to his cheeks! He looked around...

Wha... what's goin' on? Good Lord! He's alive!

The doctor stroked his chin thoughtfully! Jacob Filbert hung his head...

You suffered what is commonly called a cataleptic fit, Mr. Filbert! Cataleptic fits closely resemble death!

But doctor! I might have been buried alive!

Doctor! Telephone! Mrs. Condiak!

Some roots with mortal fear to the spot where they stood, just stared at the pale figure rising in his coffin! Suddenly, Jacob's eyes blinked open! Color rushed to his cheeks! He looked around...

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But doctor! I might have been buried alive!

Doctor! Telephone! Mrs. Condiak!

Jacob Filbert's family physician, Doctor Henley Bendiner, picked up the phone...

Excuse me, Filbert! Oh, yes, Mrs. Condiak! Is that so? No? Hmm! Oh, dear! Really? Well, I'll tell you what you should do! Take a pot and boil up...

Ten minutes later...

Good-bye, Mrs. Condiak! Er... I could've been where were buried alive!

Yes! No telling how long a cataleptic fit will last! And it is rare that a physician can tell the difference between it and actual death now...

Telephone, doctor! Mrs. (Reefuss?)

Oh, excuse me, Filbert!
Fifteen minutes later...

Yes, Mrs. Rereffus! You do that! Yes! Good-bye, er...

Is it possible that I may have more of these attacks, doctor?

Quite possible, Mr. Filburt! We must be very careful to see that we avoid what almost happened yesterday. We must...

Telephone, doctor! Mrs. Chevk!

Oh, excuse me, er...

Mr. Filburt!

Good-bye, doctor.

Jacob Filburt was frightened...Terribly frightened! He rushed to his brother's house...

Not home? Hmmph! He's never home? Always out, gallivanting? Just when I need him?

As Jacob came in the front door of his own home... no, Sadie! Really? Hmmph! Always blabbering...

You're kidding? She did? Oh, wait until Mary hears about this! Go on, tell me more.

Suddenly Jacob Filburt's face brightened! He grinned... Of course! That's it! That's the way to make sure I'm not buried alive!

Mr. Filburt hurried to the undertaker. The plan was forming in his mind. The solution.

So you see, if I do have a cataleptic fit, and you do bury me alive... I'll be able to let my family know! They'll come and dig me up!

All right, Mr. Filburt! We'll follow your instructions to the letter.

Jacob Filburt was frightened... Terribly frightened! He rushed to his brother's house...

Not home? Hmmph! He's never home? Always out, gallivanting? Just when I need him?
Finally, Mr. Filburt completed his arrangements...

**I'll pay my bills in advance.**

**Fine! We'll take care of everything, Sir! Would you like to pay for December now?**

**Yes, Sir!**

Per**fect!**

**Wait for the dial tone!**

Early the next month, it happened! A car careened crazily across a deserted street and smashed into a brick wall! The impact of tons of steel and shattering glass echoed into the night.

When the ambulance doctor examined the unfortunate driver...

**This man is dead!**

That's Jacob Filburt! I recognize him!

Doctor Bendinere assured Mrs. Filburt...

No, Mrs. Filburt! He's dead all right! The crash did it! It's definitely not a cataleptic fit!

The undertaker, however, insisted that he follow Mr. Filburt's instructions...

That's the arrangement. Mrs. Filburt, your husband demanded it. I'm going to see that it's carried out! No embalming!

But really Mr. Boxer! The other thing isn't that a little ridiculous? Bury Jacob with a connected telephone?
Hee, hee! Yep, kiddies! That's the deal! That's what poor old Jacob Filbur arranged with the undertaker and the telephone company. That he be buried without being embalmed, along with a connected telephone in his coffin! Now, now! Let's not start guessing how my little tale ends! O'yeon! Let's read on...

And so on that cold Saturday in early December, Jacob Filburts coffin was lowered into the grave.

Silence closed in as the mourners left and the grave was covered over! The thin telephone wire coming from the fresh mound of cemetery earth swayed in the wintry wind.

Night crept over the gray headstones like a black phantom! All was still... except for the whine of the wind streaming past the wire. Then came dawn. Towards afternoon...

YAAAAAAAAAAAH!

For Jacob Filbur had had a cataleptic fit! He'd suffered it while driving! That's why he crashed! But the crash hadn't killed him! He was alive... buried alive...

HELP! HELP ME... SOMEONE!

And then Jacob felt it, beside him! The cold black instrument! The telephone.

And then thank heavens! Thank heavens they remembered!

Jacob lifted the receiver! The dial tone began to hum! He counted the little holes carefully to make sure he'd dial the right number.

Oh... thank heavens! Thank heavens they remembered!

My wife, Eileen! I'll call her! She'll come and get me! Let's see... that's the third hole! R... that's the seventh! 2... 5... 9...
SO NATURALLY...

BUZZ-BUZZ... B UZZ-BUZZ... BUZZ-BUZZ... BUZZ-BUZZ...


NO ANSWER! GASP! HE'S NEVER... GASP... HOME WHEN... GASP... I NEED HIM! I KNOW! GASP!

DOCTOR BENDINERE!

OKAY! OKAY! SO PIN A WOODEN MEDAL WITH LEATHER TRIMMINGS ON YOUR NOSE! SO YOU FIGURED THIS OUT, TOO? YEP! THE DOG WAS ON THE PHONE CONSOLING ONE OF HIS COMPLAINING PATIENTS...

BUZZ-BUZZ... BUZZ-BUZZ... BUZZ-BUZZ... BUZZ-BUZZ...

IS THAT SO, MRS. CONDRIAK? HURTS THAT MUCH? OH, DEAR! YOU POOR THING! OF COURSE! NOW, HERE'S WHAT YOU DO! GOT A PAD AND PENCIL? GOOD! TAKE THIS DOWN...

BUSY! SHOUL... GASP... CHOK... HAVE... KNOWN! WHAT'LL I DO? YES! THAT'S IT... THAT'S IT...

But the dial tone didn't come! Because minutes before... thousands of miles westward...

Dead... Gasp! No dial tone! The phone is dead! Operator... Gasp... Operator... Choke...

In fact, the air in Jacob's coffin gave out long before the little orange light on the 'Trouble-Switchboard' indicated that a phone was off the hook somewhere! So the shrill voice of the operator fell on deaf ears in that dark underground horizontal phone booth... for Jacob has suffocated...

No, fiends! The dial tone didn't come! Because at that moment, the nation's phone centers were tied up with army, navy, and newspaper calls! The wires were jammed! All circuits were busy... Please... Gasp... Choke! Not much air... Left! Operator... Gasp... A dial tone... So I can... Please... Gasp... Choke... Gasp... Dial the operator... Gurgles...

This is the operator! I'm sorry! Our circuits are busy! Please hang up...

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Please hang up! The Japanese have just bombed Pearl Harbor!

Hee-hee! Yep, kiddies! Like I said in the beginning... it was 1941! I thought you were pretty shrewd... eh? Thought you had it all figured out? Well, I hope I outsmarted you as for Jacob. Well, he and his telephone are pretty decayed by now! I still get a call from him once in a while though!

Usually, I'm not home... so he leaves a spirit-message! And now, the vault-keeper awaits with his little number! Dig you later! Got another grim fairy tale for you! Bye now!
REMEMBER THE STORY ABOUT THE THREE HOLES IN THE GROUND CALLED 'WELL, WELL, WELL'? 'HEH, HEH! NOW, YOUR VAULT-KEEPER BELIEVES IN DEFLATION! SO COME INTO THE VAULT OF HORROR, SIT YOURSELF DOWN ON THAT BUCKET, AND I'LL BEGIN THE TALE OF ONE HOLE IN THE GROUND CALLED...

all Washed Up!

It was an old well! No one used it anymore! The water deep below its slimy-walled sides shimmered in the moonlight! A musty odor of stagnation and staleness drifted up from the blackness beneath its stone rim! The moss-laden water bucket hung silently on the frayed rope coiled about the weatherbeaten handle! Insects swarmed beneath the rotted shed that stood over it! A twig snapped nearby! A figure moved out of the darkness... toward the well! A woman...

$dB...$dB...
The woman disappeared into the gloom! The man stood... staring into the blackness where she'd vanished! The silence closed in again! A breeze stirred the well bucket! The frayed rope creaked...

**Gregg Sanders! That rich no-good @#$% He always wanted Marcia! Now he's going to take her away from me!**

As soon as I've saved up enough money! I've got a job now! It won't be long before I get a promotion! Then...

Good-bye, Harry! I'll see you around...

Marcia! We're finished, Harry! I'm tired of waiting! Gregg called me today! He's back in town! He wants to see me! He wants to know if I'm... free... of ties! I'm going to tell him... yes!

Marcia! When will you be ready? Harry? I want to marry you but I can't... yet! I'm not ready!

Marcia! Come back! Wait! I understand. Everything, Harry! Perfectly! I'm sorry you never gave me a ring! I would give it back... now!

She came up to the well and leaned over it! The moonlight glinted on her tear-stained cheeks! She looked down at the stagnant water far below...

How long can we go on like this, Harry? People are talking! They say so. They say you don't intend to marry me!

It isn't an excuse, Marcia! Can't you understand?

When Marcia came out of the shadows and moved to the side of the unhappy woman! A man...

They're wrong, Marcia! I want to marry you! But I can't... not yet! I'm not ready!

You've put it off and put it off! Always the same excuse! You haven't the money!
Marcia’s laughter rippled through the still night air. Gregg took her in his arms...

Gregg! These last few weeks have been wonderful! Just wonderful! I've loved every minute of it!

It doesn't have to end, Marcia! It could go on and on... like this... if you'll say 'yes'!

Marcia turned away, staring down at the shimmering well-water far below...

Are... Are you proposing to me, Gregg?

Yes, Marcia! I'm asking you to marry me! What do you say?

Marcia pulled away from Gregg; she smiled...

I'm not sure, Gregg! I'll make you love me, dearest! Just give me the chance, say you'll marry me!

Yes, Gregg! I'll... I'll marry you!

Sweetheart!

Harry clenched his fists and swore silently as he watched from his hiding place...

I won't let you have her, Gregg! I won't! She's mine! Mine!

After Marcia went off down the path toward her house, Gregg leaned over the well and grinned. He was too busy with his own thoughts to hear the crackle of the leaves behind him...

I've got to go in now, Gregg! It's late! Call me tomorrow!

I will, honey! Good-night!
Harry brought the rock down on Gregg's head again and again! Soon it felt as if he were pounding an old moth-eaten pillow.

She's mine... unggg... mine! unggg? I won't... ugh... let you... unggg... have her!

Harry knelt and slipped the ring from Gregg's finger...

I could rock it! It'd be enough to get married on!

Harry pushed the ring into his breast pocket and lifted Gregg's body...

Now to get rid of you, Gregg... where they'd never think of looking for you...

Harry stared down at Gregg's lifeless body lying before him; then, something caught his eye! Something sparkling...

His diamond ring! It... it must be worth a fortune...

Harry pushed Gregg's body over the stone rim of the well! For a moment, it hung there precariously...

Down... you... go...

There was a second or two of silence, and then a muffled splash far below! Harry peered down at the rippling murky water! Suddenly...

The ring spiraled downward crazily! Harry lunged for it, almost going over! It was too late...

Blast it! Ank...
A light blinked on in Marcia's house. A window rattled open. Harry ducked into the shadows.

Who... who's there?

Several minutes later, Harry slowed down to a walk, breathing heavily. He'd gotten out of there fast.

That gasp... ring! I've got to. Gasp. Go back and... gasp... get it!

Several times during those nights of probing, the hooks would catch onto the body below, and Harry would be forced to snap the string and begin again.

Blast it! Caught again!

A week passed. Each night, under the cover of darkness, Harry would return to the well with some string and fish hooks! Hour after hour, he'd dangle the hooks into the mucky water.

It's no use! I can't locate it!

Once, Harry'd pulled hard, and a bloated whitened hand lifted upward from the muddy surface.

Good Lord!

During the days that followed the murder, Harry would visit Marcia... to comfort her.

He never intended to marry you, Marcia! Can't you see that now?

I... sob... suppose you're right... sob, Harry!

And as the weeks went by...

Oh, Harry! I've been such a fool! Can you forgive me?

Forget about him, Marcia. It's all over! Let's pick up where we left off!
Meanwhile, Harry continued to fish for Gregg's ring with no success...

"It's no use! There's just one alternative..."

And so, about two months after the murder... one dark night, Harry came to the well with a coil of strong rope.

"It's the only way! I've got to go down there and get it!"

Harry slid the rope around one of the beams that supported the well shed and tied it securely.

Then he slipped over the stone rim of the well and began to lower himself, hand under hand, down into the dark, musty shaft.

"Phew! What a smell!"

The stench of the stagnant water below seared Harry's nostrils; soon he reached its murky surface.

"I hope it's not too deep!"

The water rose slowly. It had reached Harry's chest when his feet touched something soft...

"I... I'm standing on the... body."

Harry took a deep breath and ducked below the surface. He reached downward for the ring...

"It must be here... somewhere..."
Marcia sat bolt upright in her bed as the hysterical shrieking echoed through the stillness of the night.

She slipped on a robe, hurried downstairs and out into the darkness.

IT. IT'S COMING FROM THE WELL!

WHAT... WHAT'S THAT?

The splashing and screaming were indeed coming from the well! Marcia peered over the edge far below, Harry was trying to pull himself upward...

HARRY! HELP ME, MARCIA! PULL! PULL! HE'S... HE'S... HE'S TRYING TO DRAG ME UNDER!

Marcia began to pull with all her strength! Harry continued to shriek! Little by little he came out of the water! And then she saw it...

Good Lord!

The rotted, bloated, whitened, grinning thing had closed its teeth around Harry's ankle! It held it in a vice-like grip! Tricklees of blood ran from the incisions it had made...

Pull... Marcia! Pull! Oh, Lord... the rope...

HARRY! HARRY... IT'S GREGG!

And as the rope snapped under the strain, the two of them disappeared into the dank murky water! Marcia stared in horror as the last few bubbles rose... and broke across the stagnant surface...

Heh, heh! And that's my little yarn for this time, kiddies! Harry and Gregg ended up in the drink... together! Well-water yum gonna do? As for Marcia... she was left high and dry! By the way... before you go on to the old witch's niche, let me offer you a cool, refreshing, thirst-quencher! That is... if you hold your nose! 'Bye, now!
THE OLD WITCH'S
GRIM FAIRY TALE!

HEE, NEE! IN VAULT OF HORROR NO. 27, I TOLD YOU BLOOD-THIRSTY LITTLE FIENDS A STORY I CALLED, 'A GRIM FAIRY TALE'. MY IDIOT EDITORS WENT SO WILD OVER THAT ONE (THEY'RE BOTH IN CAGES, NOW!), I'VE DECIDED TO TELL YOU ANOTHER! I CALL THIS LITTLE CHILDLISH CHILLER...

MARRIAGE VOWS!

Once upon a time... long, long ago... there lived in a tiny kingdom a kind-hearted king and his beautiful daughter... Princess Buttercup! Now Princess Buttercup was madly in love with a handsome prince from a distant kingdom... but when she asked her father if she could marry him, her kind-hearted father replied...

BUT FATHER, DEAR! I LOVE PRINCE DASHING WITH ALL MY HEART AND SOUL... AND FINGERS... AND TOES!

I KNOW, BUTTERCUP! DEAR! BUT OUR PEOPLE ARE STARVING! OUR KINGDOM IS POOR! A ROYAL MARRIAGE AT THIS TIME WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE! YOU SEE... I'M BROKE!

NO!
BUT I LOVE PRINCE DASHING WITH ALL MY HEART AND SOUL AND...

I KNOW! I KNOW! BUT UNLESS MY PEOPLE ARE RELIEVED OF THEIR MISERY AND WOE, YOU CANNOT MARRY! WE CANNOT BE HAPPY UNLESS THE POPULACE IS HAPPY!

CAN'T YOU HIRE JESTERS TO GO AROUND AND MAKE THE PEOPLE HAPPY, FATHER? AFTER ALL, I DO LOVE PRINCE DASHING WITH ALL MY HEART AND...

I CAN'T, BUTTERCUP! THE ROYAL TREASURY IS EMPTY. CLEAN. BUSTED.. FLAT.

CANT YOU BORROW MONEY, FATHER? I DO LOVE PRINCE DASHING WITH ALL MY...

NEVER! THE ONLY ONE THAT I COULD BORROW MONEY FROM IS KING BLACKHEART... OUR BLACK-HEARTED NEIGHBOR.

UGH! HIM I HATE!

YOU GET THE PICTURE, BUTTERCUP!

AND SO, BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS BUTTERCUP COULD NOT MARRY HANDSOME PRINCE DASHING AT LEAST NOT UNTIL THE PEOPLE OF HER FATHER'S KINGDOM WERE BETTER OFF AND HAPPY! BUT THE LONGER SHE WAITED, THE WORSE THINGS GOT TO THE PEOPLE GOT UNHAPPIER AND UNHAPPIER AND UNHAPPIER... SOB.

SOB... FATHER! WHAT WILL I DO? I HAVE WAITED... AND WAITED! THE PEOPLE HAVE GOTTEN UNHAPPIER AND UNHAPPIER! AND I DO LOVE PRINCE DASHING WITH ALL OF MY HEART AND SOUL... AND FINGERS... AND TOES!

THIS IS NO LONGER A QUESTION OF YOUR HAPPINESS, MY CHILD! OUR KINGDOM IS IN A CRISIS! IT IS THE PEOPLE I AM THINKING ABOUT!

THE PEOPLE! BUT WHAT ABOUT POOR LITTLE ME... AND PRINCE DASHING... WHOM I LOVE WITH ALL OF MY HEART AND SOUL...

THE PEOPLE COME FIRST, MY CHILD! IT IS THEIR HAPPINESS YOU MUST BE CONCERNED ABOUT! AFTER THEY ARE HAPPY, THEN YOU CAN BE HAPPY... BUT NOW... THEY STARVE! THEY WALK THE STREETS IN RAGS...
Finally the kind-hearted king could stand it no longer! Things were worse than ever! So one day...

Daughter, dear! I’ve decided to swallow my pride! I’ve decided to ask our black-hearted neighbor, King Blackheart, for a loan!

Oh, Daddy! Then maybe I can marry Prince Dashing, whom I love with all of my heart and soul.

Yes, Daughter! If I’m able to borrow enough, and my people are happy, then you could marry... er... what’s his name?

Prince Dashing... whom I love with all of my heart and soul.

So, kind-hearted King Kindheart and his beautiful daughter, Princess Buttercup, rode to the neighboring kingdom to see Black-hearted King Blackheart.

Now, King Blackheart had never met Princess Buttercup! He never knew his neighbor had such a beautiful daughter!

So you need money, eh, King Kindheart? Well, I think a loan could be arranged?

Oh, Daddy! On one condition, of course!

Eh? One condition? Anything?

My condition, King Kindheart, is that you give me your daughter’s hand in marriage!

What? But she loves another!

No! Heh, heh! Either that your daughter’s hand... or no loan.

Never! Can I speak to my daughter for a minute alone?

So...
Black-hearted King Blackheart left kind-hearted King Kindheart and Princess Buttercup alone... you can't expect me to marry him, father! I love Prince Dashing with all my heart and soul. And...

The people, daughter! We must think of our people! Their happiness comes first!

But I don't love Black-hearted King Blackheart! I love Prince Dashing with...

Nevertheless, I must obtain the loan. I'm concerned about our people! I must consent to give King Blackheart your hand in marriage!

And so, when King Blackheart came back into the room...

All right, King Blackheart! Your condition will be met!

Er... when will you want the marriage to take place?

As soon as possible! Next month!

You will come to the castle next month on this day! The royal marriage will take place then!

Sob... sob... Good! Now, now, pretty Buttercup! Do not be unhappy!

I hate you, King Blackheart! I love Prince Dashing with all my sob... and sob...

Come, daughter! Till next month, then!

So, kind-hearted King Kindheart and his beautiful daughter, Princess Buttercup, returned to their own kingdom...

Sob... sob... You must be brave, Buttercup! You must think of our people! Remember! Their happiness comes first!
**News of the coming royal marriage was announced throughout Kind-Hearted King Kindheart's kingdom...**

**Hear ye... hear ye! Be it known that on Tuesday, August Fifth, Good King Blackheart will take our beloved Princess Buttercup's hand in marriage!**

Days passed, a week went by, Princess Buttercup remained in her room, crying her eyes out... sob... sob!

Come, my child, see how happy our people are! See how happy you have made them!

I know, daughter! I know! But what can I do?

The wedding date drew near, then. On the eve of the royal marriage day...

I have it! I have it! A way out, Father! Tell me, daughter! Tell me!

The next day, the wedding day. Steeple bells tolled, people danced in the streets! Soon, King Blackheart's coach appeared...

Here he comes! One side! Look! Bags of gold!
The bags of gold were distributed to the populace...

...The last one now, let's get on with the ceremony, King Kindheart!

King Kindheart led King Blackheart into the castle...

This way, King Blackheart!

No tricks, King Kindheart! I've kept my part of the bargain.

And I will keep my part, King Blackheart! A bargain is a bargain in here.

...down a long dark corridor...

Ah! The chapel!

The chapel was filled with royal guests! Near the altar stood Princess Buttercup at her side stood Prince Dashing...

What's this, King Kindheart? I am to have your daughter's hand in marriage— not him!

That's right, King Blackheart! There's to be a double ceremony today.

Prince Dashing will marry Buttercup...

What? But...

Hee, hee! Yes! They made the old boy, King Blackheart, go through with it, too, kiddies! And after that, everybody lived happily ever after... Prince Dashing with one-armed Princess Buttercup... and Blackhearted King Blackheart with his handy wife! Hee, hee! And that's my fairy tale for this issue!

Grim? That's what I told you! Bye, now!
THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HMMPH! FAIRY TALES? WHAT NEXT? PRETTY SOON THAT OLD HAG WILL BE TELLIN' FUNNY-LITTLE-ANIMAL HORROR STORIES! WELL, NOT ME! I'M FROM THE OLD SCHOOL! STRAIGHT GORE... THAT'S MY LORE! YEP! IT'S YOUR CRYPT-KEEPER READY TO DIG UP ANOTHER TALE OF TERROR FROM MY COLLECTION. SO SIT DOWN ON THAT SAMPLE-CASE AND I'LL BEGIN THE BLOOD-CURDLER I CALL...

DEATH OF SOME SALES­MEN!

Your name is STUART THATCHER. You're a salesman... a traveling salesman! For two years now you've been driv­ing these backwoods roads, hustling your line! You go from farmhouse to farmhouse, making your pitch! Sometimes you hawk a sale... mostly not! Today looks like one of your bad days...

NO! NO, I SAID... WELL, THANKS, AND ANYWAY I'LL DROP BY AGAIN!!
Some of these backwoods roads are smooth... some are pretty sad! Like the one you're on now! It's muddy and rutted! Your beat-up old car rocks and rolls! The sky above you is bleak and grey! You curse softly to yourself...

Looks like rain, drat it! And here I am in the middle of nowhere!

The rain continues! Suddenly your car sags awkwardly to the right! The engine coughs and stalls! You're over your wheel hubs in a puddle...

Ow!! Stuck! Now what?

You sit there, in the middle of that rain-flooded muddy backwoods road, counting to ten! Then you look around...

Must be a farmhouse somewhere near here! Maybe they can put me up!

You peer through the gloomy downpour! Then you see it! The house! It stands black and somber, outlined against the grey sky...

Hey! What luck! There's a house... up on that hill! I'll make a break for it!

You leap from your stalled auto and start for the house! The raindrops slam against your face! Your clothes begin to sop up the wetness! You splash through the rain-swelled puddles...

Hope they've got a phone so I can call in for a tow!

And then you're on the porch! The house is old and weatherbeaten! The shutters are broken and hang crazily from rusted hinges! The blinds are drawn! There's no sign of life! Behind you, the rain pours noisily off the porch roof...

Looks deserted! Well! I'll knock anyway.
YOU FOLLOW YOUR PISTON ON THE CLIMBING DOOR! THE SOUND ECHOES THROUGH THE HOUSE! FOR A MOMENT ALL IS STILL SAVE FOR THE RAIN DROPS! THEN HEAVY FOOT STEPS APPROACH! THE DOOR CREAKS OPEN...

YES? HELLO! I WONDER IF YOU CAN HELP ME! I'M A TRAVELING SALESMAN, AND MY CAR...

YOU FOLLOW THE NICE OLD COUPLE INTO THEIR KITCHEN! YOU LOOK AROUND AND GASP! YOU'RE AMAZED! THAT OLD HOUSE WITH SUCH MODERN APPLIANCES...

MY! YOU CERTAINLY HAVE ALL THE LATEST CONVENIENCES, FOLKS!

OH, YES! YOU SEE, WE'VE TELL 'EM ABOUT THE FIRST ONE, HENRIETTA! THE ONE THAT SOLD US THE REFRIGERATOR!

THE OLD WOMAN WHO HAS ANSWERED THE DOOR GRINS! SHE STEPS BACK, HER FACE BEAMING.

A SALESMAN! COME IN! MY CAR STALLED DOWN ON THE ROAD! THE WIRES MUST HAVE GOTTEN WET!

EBAN! IT'S A SALESMAN! I'LL BE RIGHT THERE, HENRIETTA!

THE OLD WOMAN CLOSES THE DOOR BEHIND YOU AND CALLS.

I WANTED IF YOU PEOPLE HAVE A PHONE!

PRAY PHONE! NO PHONE! SALESMAN, EH?

OH, THAT'S TOO BAD! I THOUGHT I MIGHT CALL IN FOR A TOW! I'M STUCK... DOWN AT THE ROAD!

CAN WE OFFER YOU ANYTHING, MR... MR...

THATCHER, MA'AM! STUART THATCHER! I'M WITH THE JACKSON COMPANY! A CUP OF COFFEE WOULD HIT THE SPOT... IF IT WOULDN'T BE TOO MUCH TROUBLE!

COME INTO THE KITCHEN, MR THATCHER! NO TROUBLE AT ALL, MR THATCHER!

YOU FOLLOW THE NICE OLD COUPLE INTO THEIR KITCHEN! YOU LOOK AROUND AND GASP! YOU'RE AMAZED! THAT OLD HOUSE WITH SUCH MODERN APPLIANCES...

OH, YES! THE REFRIGERATOR! EBAN AND I'D SAVED FOR YEARS, MR THATCHER! PUT AWAY EVERY GENT WE COULD MANAGE! WE'D ALWAYS WANTED ONE! THEN THAT SALESMAN CAME! THE ONE THAT SOLD US THAT ONE!

THE OLD WOMAN'S FACE DARKENS! SHE STARES AT YOU, WHISPERING HOARSELY...

THE DIRTY NO GOOD CROOK!
You shift uncomfortably in your seat, Stuart Thatcher? There's something strange about this old couple, but you can't put your finger on it...

Crook? It didn't work, Mr. Thatcher! The refrigerator didn't work! He cheated us! Took our lives' savings!

That's why... from then on... we vowed that if any other salesman tried to sell us anything...

That'swise! Tell 'im 'bout the freezer, Eban!

EBAN POINTS TO THE LARGE FROZEN-FOOD LOCKER STANDING NEXT TO THE REFRIGERATOR

When he came. The one selling the freezer... we made sure it worked!

SHOW 'IM, EBAN!

EBAN FLINGS OPEN THE FREEZER LID! You look down... suddenly, your heart stops! A wave of nausea sweeps over you! Inside that locker is a frost-covered blue-skinned body...

GOOD LORD! Made sure, all right? Tried it out on him... the salesman? Worked good! See?

You look around... frantically! These people are mad! Eban pats the new electric stove...

Feller that come with this was real nice! But that first crook was nice also! Can't trust 'em jus' 'cause they're nice! Tried the stove out, too!

OPEN THE OVEN DOOR, MR. THATCHER!

You pull down the oven door... just a crack! You step back horrified! The door falls open all the way! Inside is a brown-crusted well-roasted corpse...

STOVE WORKED GOOD, TOO! SEE!

Don't get any ideas about runnin', Mr. Thatcher! This shotgun's loaded...
YOU TURN FROM THE REVOLTING SIGHT OF THE BROWNED BODY IN THE OVEN AND STARE INTO THE MENACING BARREL OF A SHOT-GUN...

GASP SHOW 'IM THE GRANDFATHER'S CLOCK. EBAN! FELLER SHOWED UP TRYIN' TO SELL US ONE OF THEM THINGS ONE DAY!

GASP SHOW 'IM THE GRANDFATHER'S CLOCK. EBAN!

EBAN SHOWED UP TRYIN' TO SELL US ONE OF THEM THINGS ONE DAY!

'CO'MON YOU FOLLOW THE OLD MAN INTO THE HALL. THE CLOCK STANDS THERE TICKING LOUDLY.' BEHIND THE GLASS WINDOW, A BOOY HANGS. HEAD DOWN... SWINGING BACK AND FORTH! A PENDULUM, A HUMAN PENDULUM...

GOOD LORD! WORKS GOOD, EH. MR. THATCHER? 'CO'MON, MR. THATCHER...

THE BODY HANGS HEAD DOWN, ITS MOUTH CLOSED AROUND THE FANPIPE. ITS FEET ARE HOOKED TO THE HANDLE! A HUMAN VACUUM BAG...

N-NO... TH-THANKS!

FELLER COME ALONG SELLIN' VACUUM CLEANERS!

'CO'MON FELLER COME ALONG SELLIN' VACUUM CLEANERS!

PITY GOOD VACUUM CLEANERS WORKED GOOD, TOO!

FELLER COME ALONG SELLIN' VACUUM CLEANERS!

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FELLER COME ALONG SELLIN' VACUUM CLEANERS!
Eban swings open the console doors. A charred wide-eyed face stares out at you from behind the escutcheon.

Every time we turn'er on, he begins to smoke!

No! N-never mind! He kept hollerin' 'bout a picture-tube. Remember, Henrietta?

Dirty crook!

...Henrietta? Dirty crook?

Eban shrugs. That's about all, Mr. Thatcher!

How 'bout the clothes-dryer, Eban?

Eban's face brightens.

Oh, yeah! That! C'mon, Mr. Thatcher! Follow me!

Down the cellar!

The cellar stairs are dark! They creak as you go down...

Feller said it'd dry clothes fine!

That one worked, Eban!

That's right, Henrietta! It '010, didn't it!

There it is, Mr. Thatcher!

Cough... S'matter, Mr. Thatcher? Don't you feel well, Mr. Thatcher?
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